

TO THE  
**KINGS**  
MOST EXCELLENT  
**MAJESTY.**

THE  
Due Account, and Humble Petition  
OF THE  
MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL,  
Lately COMMISSIONED for the  
REVIEW & ALTERATION  
OF THE  
**LITURGY.**

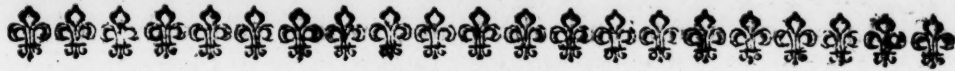
---

LONDON,  
Printed *Anno Domini*, 1661.

TO THE  
KING  
MAYESTY.

Die Academie, and Honorable Members  
OF THE  
MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL  
AND COMMISSIONERS OF THE  
REVIEW & ALTERATION  
OF THE  
LITURGY.

LONDON:  
Printed by D. B. 1671.



TO THE  
K I N G S  
Most Excellent  
MAJESTY.

*May it please Your Majesty,*

**W**hen the distempered Nation, wearied with its own Contentions and Divisions, did groan for Unity and Peace, (the wonderfull Providence of the most Righteous God appearing for the removal of Impediments) their eyes were upon your Majesty, as the person born to be (under God) the Center of their Concord; and taught by Affliction to break the bonds of the Afflicted, and by experience of the sad effects of mens uncharitableness, and passions, to restrain all from violence and extremity, and keep up moderation and mediocrity, the Oil of Charity and Peace: And when your subjects desires were accomplished in your Majesties peaceable possession of the Throne, it was the joy and encouragement of the Sober and Religious, that you began the exercise of your Government, with a Proclamation full of Christian Zeal against Debauchery and Profaneness, declaring also your dislike of [those who under pretence of Affection to your Majesty, and your Service, assume to themselves the liberty of reviling, threat-

A 2

ning,

ning, and reproaching others, to prevent the Reconciliation and Union of hearts and affections, which can only (with Gods blessing) make us rejoyce in each other] Our comforts also were carried on by Your Majesties early, and ready entertainment of Motions for accommodation in those points of Discipline and Worship, in which we disagreed, and Your professed Resolutions to draw us together by mutual approaches, and publishing Your healing Declaration, which was received with thanks of Your House of Commons, and the applause of the people, and the special joy of those that longed for Concord and Tranquillity in the Church. In which Your Majesty declared so much satisfaction in the foundations of Agreement already laid, for that You [should think Yourself very unfortunate, and suspect that You are defective in the Administration of Government, if any superstructures should slack those foundations, and contract or lessen the blessed gift of Charity, which is a vital part of Christian Religion.

And as in the said gracious Declaration Your Majesty resolved to [appoint an equal number of Learned Divines of both Perswasions, to review the Liturgy, and make such Alterations as shall be thought most necessary, and some Additional Forms of Scripture phrase, as neer as may be, suited unto the nature of several parts of Worship, and that it be left to the Ministers choice to use one, or other, at his discretion: So in accomplishment thereof, Your Majesty among others, directed Your Commission to be for the review of [the several Directions, Rules, and Forms of Prayer, and things in the said Book of Common-Prayer contained] And (if occasion be) to make such seasonable and necessary Alterations, Corrections, and Amendments thereof, as by and between us shall be agreed upon to be needful, or expedient for the giving a satisfaction to tender consciences, and restoring and continuance of Peace and Unity in the Church under Your Protection and Government; and what we agree upon as needful or expedient to be done for the Altering, Diminishing, or Enlarging the said Book of Common-Prayer, forthwith to certifie and present it in Writing to Your Majesty.

In Obedience to this Your Majesties Commission, wee did  
with



with the Right Reverend Bishops, who required of us that before any personal debate, we should bring in writing all our Exceptions against the book of Common-Prayer, and all the Additional Forms which we desired; Both which wee performed, and received from them an Answer to the first, and returned them our full Reply; The last week of our time being designed to personal conference, was, at the will of the Right Reverend Bishops, spent in a particular dispute with three of each part, about the sinfulness of one of the Injunctions, from which we desired to bee free, and in some other Conference on the By. And though the account which wee are forced to give to your Majesty of the issue of our Consultations, is, that no Agreements are subscribed by us to be offered to your Majesty according to your expectation; and though it be none of our intent to cast the least unmeet reflection upon the Right Reverend Bishops, and Learned Brethren, who think not meet to yeild to any considerable Alterations, to the ends expressed in your Majesties Commission; yet we must say, that it is some quiet to our minds, that we have not been guilty of your Majesties, and your Subjects disappointments, and that we account not your Majesties Gracious Commission, and our labour lost, having peace of conscience in the discharge of our duty to God and you, that wee have been the seekers and followers of Peace; and have earnestly Pleaded, and humbly petitioned for it. And we humbly beseech your Majesty, to believe that we own no Principles of Faction or Disobedience, nor patronize the Errours or obstinacy of any.

It's granted us by all, that nothing should bee commanded us by man, which is contrary to the word of God: that if it bee, and wee know it, we are bound not to perform it, God being the absolute Universal Sovereign; That wee must use all just means to discern the will of God, and whether the commands of men be contrary to it; that if the command bee sinful, and any through the neglect of sufficient search, shall judge it lawful; his culpable error excuseth not his doing it, from being sin; and therefore as a reasonable creature must needs have a judgement of discerning, that he may

rationally obey it; so is hee with the greatest care and diligence to exercise it in the greatest things, even in the obeying of God, and saving of his Soul; and that were a strong probability of great sin and danger lyeth before us, we must not rashly run on without search, and that to go on against Conscience, even where it is mistaken, is sin and danger to him that erreth. And on the other side, we are remembred, that in things no way against the Laws of God, the Commands of our Governours must be obeyed; but if they command what God forbids, we must patiently submit to suffering, and every soul must be subject unto the higher Powers, for conscience sake, and not resist: The publick Judgement, civil, or ecclesiastical, belongeth onely to publick persons, and not to any private man; that no man must be causelessly, and pragmatically inquisitive into the Reasons of his Superiours commands; nor by pride and self-conceitedness, exalt his own understanding above it's worth and office, but all to be modestly, and humbly self-suspicious; that none must erroneously pretend to Gods Law, against the just command of his Superiours, nor pretend the doing of his duty to be sin; that hee who suspecteth his Superiours commands to bee against Gods Laws, must use all means for full Information, before hee settle in a course of disobeying them; and that hee who indeed discovereth any thing commanded to be sin, though hee must not do it, must manage his opinion with very great tenderness and care of the publick Peace, and the honours of his Governours: These are our Principles: If we are otherwise represented to your Majesty, we are mis-represented; If we are accused of contradicting them, we humbly crave that we may not be condemned, till wee bee heard.

It is the desire of our Souls to contribute our parts and interests to the utmost, for the promoting of holiness, charity, unity, and obedience to Rulers in all lawful things: But if wee should sin against God, because we are commanded, who shall answer for us, or save us from his Justice? And wee humbly crave, that it may bee no just *Gruamen* of our dissent, that thereby we suppose Superiours may erre, seeing it is but supposing them to bee men not yet in Heaven; and this

this may bee reputed to every one that differeth in Opinion from another. And wee beseech Your Majesty to beleeeve, that as wee seek no greater matters in the World than daily Bread, with liberty to Preach the Gospel, and Worship God according to his Word, and the practise of the Primitive Churches; so wee hope it is not through Pusillanimity, and over-much tenderresse of suffering, that wee have pleaded so much for the avoiding of suffering, to our selves or others. May none of our sufferings hinder the prosperity of the Church, and the good of Souls, and wee have enough. And wee suppose those that think the persons inconsiderable in Number and Quality for whom wee plead, will not themselves beleeeve that we have done this for popular applause: this were not so much to seek the reward of Hypocrites, as to play the game of Fools; seeing the applause of inconsiderable men can bee but inconsiderable, and wee know our selves that we are like thus to offend those that are not inconsiderable; the Lord that searcheth hearts, doth know that it is not so much the avoiding of suffering to our selves, or any particular person, that is the end of our endeavours, though this were no Ambitious end) as the peace and welfare of the Church and Kingdome, under Your Majesties Government. We know, that supposing them who are for the Ceremonies, to be as Pious and Charitable as the rest, it cannot so much offend them that another may forbear them, as it must offend another to be forced to use them; and we know that conscientious men will not consent to the practising of things in their judgement unlawfull, when those may yeild that count the matter indifferent. And for the management of this Treaty, it being agreed at our first meeting, that nothing be reported as the words or sense of either part, but what is delivered by them in writing; We humbly crave, that Your Majesty receive no more as ours, and that what is charged on any particular person, he may be answerable for himself; and though the Reverend Bishops have not had time to consider our Additions to the Liturgy, and of our Reply, that yet it may be considered before a Determination be made. And though we seem to have laboured in vain, we shall yet lay this work of Reconciliation and Peace at Your Majesties



Majesties feet, beseeching you to prosper such a blessed Resolution, till it attain successe: We must needs beleve, that when Your Majesty took our Consent to a Liturgy to be a foundation that would infer our Concord, You meant not that we should have no Concord, but by consenting to this Liturgy, without any considerable Alterations.

And when You comforted us with Your Resolutions to draw us together, by yeilding on both sides in what we could, You meant not that wee should be the boat to lay the banks that should not stir; and when Your Majesty commanded us by Letters Pattents to meet about such Alterations as are needfull or expedient for giving satisfaction to tender Consciences, and the restoring and continuing of Peace and Unity, wee rest assured, that it was not Your sense that those tender Consciences were to be forced to practise all which they judged unlawful, and not so much as a Ceremony abated them, or that our Treaty was only to convert either party to the Opinion of another, and that all our hopes of Concord and Liberty consisted only in disputing the Bishops into Non-conformity, or coming in every Ceremony to their minds.

Finally (for Your Majesty, under God, is the protection where-to Your people flye, and as the same necessity still remains which drew forth Your Gracious Declaration) wee most Humbly and Earnestly beseech Your Majesty, that the benefit of the said Declaration may be continued to Your people, and in particular, that none be punished or troubled for not using the Common-Prayer, till it be effectually reformed, and the Addition made, as there exprest. We crave Your Majesties Pardon for the tediousnesse of this Addresse, and shall wait in hope, that so great a Calamity of Your people as will follow the loss of so many able faithful Ministers, as the rigorous Imposition would cast out, shall never be recorded in the History of Your Reign, but that these impediments of Concord being forborn, Your Kingdome may flourish in Piety and Peace, that this may be the signal honour of Your happy Reign, and Your joy in the day of Your account, which is the prayer of

*Your Majesties Faithful and Obedient Subjects.*



